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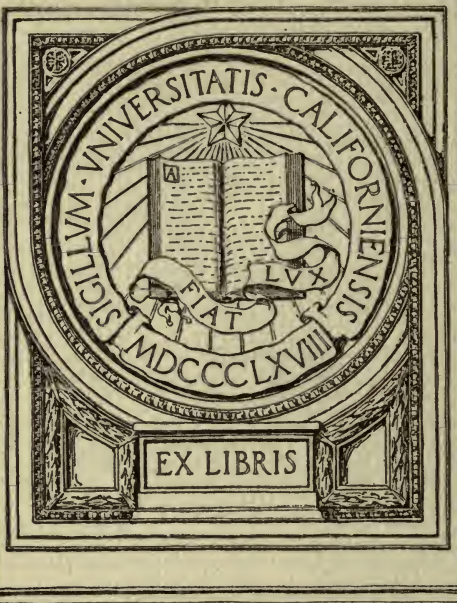

A Vocabulary Test and a Monosyllabic Essay on Art

By Orra Eugene Monnette

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LOS ANGELES, CAL.

A VOCABULARY TEST
AND
A MONOSYLLABIC ESSAY
ON ART

BY
ORRA EUGENE MONNETTE

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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This is humbly and affectionately
Dedicated to the wise men of
The Scribes,
The oldest social club in Los Angeles,
And which is comprised of
Twenty Five
American Gentlemen
Of diversified vocations,
Of cultured refinement,
Of seasoned years,
Of ripened sagacity,
Of patriotic loyalty,
Of keen erudition,
Who
Boldly sit in mutual counsel
And
Judgment upon the affairs of life
And
The human race, without
Fear of or favor to each other
Or any other individual
in the whole world.

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A VOCABULARY TEST

An article, entitled "A Test of Your Intelligence," appeared in the issue of the Literary Digest of February 16th, 1918. It is reproduced below by permission of the editor of that noteworthy and excellent publication. It attracted the attention of The Scribes and was duly considered by that Club, the members yielding to the test as delineated in the article, and attaining an average percentage of 94.

"A Test of Your Intelligence

To pick out an adult of superior intelligence by any one test may be regarded as not within the bounds of possibility; yet Prof. Lewis M. Terman, of Stanford University, proposes one, which he says has such a high value that, used without others, it will give results within 10 per cent. of those obtained by the far-famed Binet-Simon scale. This test is the so-called "vocabulary test," and it is so easily used that within a brief period readers of THE DIGEST will doubtless be applying it to their families and friends. The vocabulary used, copied below from Professor Terman's book on "The Measurement of Intelligence," consists of 100 words derived by selecting the last word of every sixth column in a dictionary containing 18,000 words, presumably the most common in the language. The assumption is that 100 words selected according to some arbitrary rule will be a large enough sampling to afford a fairly reliable index of a subject's entire vocabulary.

1. orange
2. bonfire
3. roar
4. gown
5. tap
6. scorch
7. puddle
8. envelope
9. straw
10. rule
11. haste
12. afloat
13. eyelash
14. copper
15. health
16. curse
17. guitar
18. mellow
19. pork
20. impolite
21. plumbing
22. outward
23. lecture
24. dungeon
25. southern
26. noticeable
27. muzzle
28. quake
29. civil
30. treasury

31. reception
32. ramble
33. skill
34. misuse
35. insure
36. stave
37. regard
38. nerve
39. crunch
40. juggler
41. majesty
42. brunette
43. snip
44. apish
45. sportive
46. hysterics
47. Mars
48. repose
49. shrewd
50. forfeit
51. peculiarity
52. coinage
53. mosaic
54. bewail
55. disproportionate
56. dilapidated
57. charter
58. conscientious
59. avarice
60. artless
61. priceless
62. swaddle
63. tolerate
64. gelatinous
65. depredation
66. promontory
67. frustrate
68. milksop
69. philanthropy
70. irony
71. lotus
72. drabble
73. harpy
74. embody
75. infuse
76. flaunt
77. declivity
78. fen
79. ochre
80. exaltation
81. incrustation
82. laity
83. selectman
84. sapient
85. retroactive
86. achromatic
87. ambergris
88. casuistry
89. paleology
90. perfunctory
91. precipitancy
92. theosophy
93. piscatorial
94. sudorific
95. parterre
96. homunculus
97. cameo
98. shagreen
99. limpet
100. complot

OF COURSE, YOU ARE A SUPERIOR ADULT

If so, you can give passable definitions of at least seventy-five of the above words. The average adult can not manage more than sixty-five of them. Ability to give seventy-five definitions from the above list indicates the possession of a working vocabulary of 13,500 words.

Says a reviewer in January issue, The Journal of Heredity (Washington):

"Rather extensive experimentation with this list and others chosen in a similar manner has proved that the assumption is justified . . . . . .

"It may seem to the reader almost incredible that so small a sampling of words would give a reliable index of an individual's vocabulary. That it does so is due to the operation of the ordinary laws of chance. It is analogous to predicting the results of an election when only a small proportion of the ballots have been counted. It is known that a ballot-box contains 600 votes, and if when only thirty have been counted it is found that they are divided between two candidates in the proportion of twenty to ten, it is safe to predict that a complete count will give the two candidates approximately 400 and 200 respectively. In 1914 about 1,000,000 votes were cast for Governor in California, and when only 10,000 votes had been counted, or a hundredth of all, it was announced and conceded that Governor Johnson had been reelected by about 150,000 plurality. The completed count gave him 188,505 plurality. The error was less than 10 per cent of the total vote.

"The 100 words thus chosen are arranged approximately (tho not exactly) in the order of their difficulty, and the examiner usually begins with the easier words and proceeds to the harder, continuing until the subject examined is no longer able to define the words. 'With children under nine or ten years,' Dr. Terman directs, 'begin with the first. Apparently normal children of ten years may safely be credited with the first ten words without being asked to define them. Apparently normal children of twelve may begin with word 16 and fifteen-year-olds with word 21. Except with subjects of almost adult intelligence, there is no need to give the last ten or fifteen words, as these are almost never correctly defined by school-children. A safe rule to follow is to continue until eight or ten successive words have been missed and to score the remainder minus without giving them.'

"As to scoring, 'credit a response in full if it gives one correct meaning for a word, regardless of whether that meaning is the most common one, and regardless of whether it is the original or a derived meaning. Occasionally half credit may be given, but this should be avoided as far as possible.

" 'To find the entire vocabulary (of the individual who is being examined), multiply the number of words known by 180. Thus the child who defines twenty words correctly has a vocabulary of $20 \times 180 = 3{,}600$ words; fifty correct definitions would mean a vocabulary of 9,000 words, etc. The following are the standards for different years, as determined by the vocabulary reached by 60 per cent. to 65 per cent. of the subjects of the various mental levels:

	Words	*Vocabulary*
Eight years	20	3,600
Ten years	30	5,400
Twelve years	40	7,200
Fourteen years	50	9,000
Average adult	65	11,700
Superior adult	75	13,500

Altho the form of the definition is significant, it is not taken into consideration in scoring. The test is intended to explore the range of ideas rather than the evolution of thought forms. When it is evident that the child has one fairly correct meaning for a word, he is given full credit for it, however poorly the definition may have been stated.

" 'While there is naturally some difficulty now and then in deciding whether a given definition is correct, this happens much less frequently than one would expect. In order to get a definite idea of the extent of error due to the individual differences among examiners, we have had the definitions of twenty-five subjects graded independently by ten different persons. The results showed an average difference below three in the number of definitions scored plus. Since these subjects attempted on an average about sixty words, the average number of doubtful definitions per subject was below 5 per cent. of the number attempted.

" 'An idea of the degree of leniency to be exercised may be had from the following examples of definitions, which are mostly low grade, but acceptable:

1. *Orange.* "An orange is to eat." "It is yellow and grows on a tree."
2. *Bonfire.* "You burn it outdoors." "You burn some leaves or things." "It's a big fire."
3. *Roar.* "A lion roars." "You holler loud."
4. *Gown.* "To sleep in." "It's a nightie." "It's a nice gown that ladies wear."

"The test is particularly interesting, since it seems to give reasonably correct measurement of the intelligence of adults, and there are very few single tests which can be easily applied that give reliable results in such cases. There is, Professor Terman finds, a well marked difference between the average adult and the superior adult, altho the number of words in the vocabulary by which they differ is only ten. A majority of average adults can give sixty-five words, but only one-third of them can give seventy-five words—the test of the superior adult. But of those whom extensive testing shows to be 'superior adults,' 90 per cent. can pass the superior adult test of seventy-five definitions. 'Ability to pass the test is relatively independent of the number of years the subject has attended

school, our business men showing even a higher percentage of passes than high-school pupils.'

"While this test may be more reliable than any other single test, it would be a mistake to place too much dependence on it. It is somewhat influenced by the kind of training and education one has had—altho less so than would be expected. No single test, and no series of tests, is an adequate measure of the general intelligence. The trained examiner takes account of every clue he can find, and it would be a disservice to psychology to give the impression that any tests are infallible, especially if given by unskilled examiners or by auto-examination. The most that is claimed for the Binet tests, for example, may be stated in Dr. Terman's own words:

" 'One who knows how to apply the tests correctly and who is experienced in the psychological interpretation of responses can in forty minutes arrive at a more accurate judgment as to a subject's intelligence than would be possible without the tests after months or even years of close observation. . . . . .

" 'Exceptionally superior endowment is discoverable by the tests, however unfavorable the home from which it comes, and inferior endowment can not be normalized by all the advantages of the most cultured home. Or, to quote from William Stern, the greatest German exponent of the psychology of individual differences, 'The tests actually reach and discover the general developmental conditions of intelligence, and not mere fragments of knowledge and attainments acquired by chance'." (End of Literary Digest article.)

As a result of this experimentation and the discussion which followed, the writer urged that the title of the article in question is a misnomer and that the test itself is neither fair nor comprehensive. It is not a test of intelligence, but merely an abortive test of vocabulary, though not even partially exact, from the standpoint of standardization. One might be a jibbering idiot, i. e., possessed of a vocabulary, and not necessarily intelligent. Or a parrot might be said to have a vocabulary and yet not be properly classed as intelligent. In fact, men may employ or speak words, parrot-like, without in truth showing any real intelligence. Further, a vocabulary test, in the last analysis, is not a true test of education, which as one can readily comprehend includes a vaster scope of knowledge, experiences and phenomena than are subject to revelation by an ostentatious display of or even acquisition of words alone. Yet, it may be conceded that

an intelligent use and understanding of words to a limited extent show knowledge and indicate education.

Furthermore, the test in question is not fair, because it is based upon a "hit and miss" principle in word selection, amplified upon the idea of "gambling chance," which under no circumstances could be properly said to be exact or even correct experimentation. Then, too, it is based upon a dictionary of 18,000 words, from which an arbitrary multiplier is secured in the number 180. From this a table is arbitrarily compiled to establish the vocabulary averages indicated as to those of certain years, not as to the degrees of either their education or their intelligence.

The range of vocabulary can not be determined by a dictionary of 18,000 words. It appears that Noah Webster, in the First Quarto Edition of his dictionary (1828) set forth word definitions to the number of 70,000. In the "Unabridged" of 1864 there were 114,000. And in The International of 1890 there were 175,000 words. It is possible that 200,000 words actually exist in the English Language to define and describe mental concepts or ideas. Or, in another view, it is said that Shakespeare's completed, known works, comprise 7,000 separate, single words, yet it is not correct to say that such was his largest vocabulary.

Again, a large element entering into the exactness of such a test is the field of technical and scientific language, which to those specially trained is well known, but not always to the generality of intelligent or well educated men, yet these words enter into many general vocabulary requirements.

The test, as employed in the article, is a plaything merely, interesting up to a certain point, of neither exactitude nor fairness. It might be said to be a possible approximation, since in one such list of 100 words the experimenter might attain a percentage of 80, while in another list his grade might be only 60 and neither would exhibit the extent or limitations of his vocabulary.

As a result of these considerations the writer prepared two lists of words which are appended. (a) Is a list arbitrarily selected from Webster's International Dictionary, containing 150 words. The one

taking the test is first given the privilege of arbitrarily eliminating 50 words from the list, reducing it to 100 words. He may eliminate any word which he can conscientiously state he never heard spoken or never saw in print. If he has either seen it printed or heard it in speech, he should not eliminate, if perchance, he is unable to define it or to use it. Of the remaining 100 words, he applies the test to himself to ascertain the number of words of which he can give either a definition or can use in an acceptable or understandable sense. Honesty must enter into this test and it is presumptively unfair to grade perfect on a word which is simply recognized, but whose meaning or use is not clear in one's mind. For instance, the word "kippered" is commonly known to relate to kippered herring, etc., but that is not sufficient. What does the word itself really mean? And since it refers to three distinct processes, one cannot be said to know or understand the word if he be unable to give those processes. Having taken the (a) test, and ascertained your percentage, follow it with the (b) test. The latter is a list of words selected by the compiler from current newspapers, magazines and popular books of the day, such as anyone, inclined to pursue reading of a wider scope, might easily come upon in his search of both information and entertainment. The words selected have been chosen purposely to provide a severe test of your vocabulary. Try it out honestly. Obtaining the percentage, add this to that obtained from test (a) and divide the result by two. The resultant percentage is again an approximation of the range of your vocabulary and its extent, but not of your intelligence or education, except that the general fact that you are a *well read man,* possessed of a vocabulary of some size, intelligently used, is some measure of your literary and linguistic abilities.

These tests were submitted to The Scribes and one of its honored members attained the final grade of 87%. The majority ranged below 75. Yet, each and all are not only highly intelligent but well educated men. As first stated, under the Terman test these men secured much higher percentages, an average of 94%.

(a) List of 150 Words for Vocabulary Test

1. abbatoir
2. abrade
3. abecedarian
4. agrestic
5. altruistic
6. ana
7. anneal
8. aorist
9. astrict
10. backgammon
11. ballista
12. beldame
13. bibliophile
14. bight
15. bizzarre
16. boggle
17. bracken
18. caliper
19. calenture
20. campanile
21. carafe
22. cedilla
23. chic
24. choler
25. coction
26. concierge
27. cosmos
28. crass
29. dieresis
30. demurrage
31. dissensualized
32. dilettante
33. dubiety
34. duodecimo
35. egesta
36. emeritus
37. empirical
38. esoteric
39. exotic
40. exposuary
41. feldspar
42. flaccid
43. friable
44. funicle
45. fustian
46. gelding
47. gemmation
48. gnome
49. grayling
50. howdah
51. hirsute
52. histology
53. huckaback
54. illusory
55. imbricate
56. imbrued
57. intrigant
58. isosceles
59. izzat
60. jennet
61. kale
62. kaolin
63. kotow
64. king-bolt
65. kismet
66. lacteal
67. laminate
68. lamprey
69. lapidary
70. lanyard
71. lappet
72. largesse
73. lentil
74. lese majesty
75. lesion
76. lethal
77. libretto
78. lignum-vitæ
79. lithuria
80. mauve
81. malversation
82. maumet
83. maunder
84. microcosm
85. molybdenite
86. naivete
87. nippy
88. nuncupative
89. nuzzle
90. nutrient
91. oaf
92. oblation
93. octahedral
94. os
95. pabulum
96. paranoia
97. pedantic
98. pistachio
99. pilose
100. pinnate
101. plasma
102. plebiscite
103. puss-in-boots
104. quadrate
105. quatrain
106. quintessence
107. quip
108. quondam
109. rapprochement
110. ratiocination
111. rationale
112. reredos
113. roc
114. ruelle
115. rutabaga
116. rubric
117. sacerdotal
118. saggittal
119. scrabble
120. sheik
121. simony
122. sinus
123. squamus
124. stadium
125. steinbok
126. stentorian
127. syntax
128. syllogism
129. syzygy
130. tang
131. tatting
132. tercet
133. teredo
134. treacle
135. tutelary
136. tyro
137. ubiety
138. umbra
139. ursine
140. vacuity
141. vesicate
142. voile
143. voodoo
144. vomer
145. warder
146. withers
147. wreak
148. yorick
149. yodel
150. zouave

(b) List of 100 Words for Vocabulary Test

1. accolade
2. afflatus
3. balmoral
4. barrage
5. berserker
6. biceptual
7. bloc
8. bourdonnement
9. bravura
10. butyl
11. caitiff
12. camouflage
13. camomile
14. capriped
15. cartouche
16. chauvinistic
17. chaffinch
18. cinquecento
19. chiaroscuro
20. cliche
21. coloratura
22. comette
23. condottiere
24. darnel
25. diapason
26. disjecta
27. dissonance
28. divarication
29. dulcin
30. embonpoint
31. empyreal
32. ensconce
33. epizootic
34. eschatology
35. euphuistic
36. fillip
37. feuillage
38. fustiness
39. gneiss
40. hemostatic
41. hortatory
42. ikon
43. incunabulary
44. ineluctable
45. jabot
46. kelson
47. kike
48. kippered
49. kiosk
50. linsey
51. lusus
52. madrigal
53. mangel
54. marplot
55. melange
56. metayer
57. meticulously
58. mirabilary
59. mime
69. misanthropy
61. mumpsimus
62. muzzy
63. nirvanic
64. obsidian
65. octroi
66. ossuary
67. parvenu
68. pasquinade
69. patchouli
70. pattiserie
71. petard
72. pewit
73. philobiblon
74. picaresque
75. pismire
76. pundit
77. prurient
78. quahaug
79. refocillate
80. recherche
81. recrudescence
82. rodomontade
83. rubefacient
84. sautoir
85. shard
86. sheol
87. simulacrum
88. solecism
89. sternutation
90. strophe
91. suggan
92. supernaculum
93. suzerainty
94. tettinx
95. thanatopsis
96. tintinnabulum
97. tricot
98. trilogy
99. variorum
100. virtuoso

In the discussion following the test an argument was adduced as to the desirable force and effect of any statement, speech or literary production, when only simple words or those of single syllables should be employed instead of more involved and longer words. The impracticability of treatment of any theme in words of one syllable was considered. Particularly, if it should be carried to any length. The author has made the attempt. As is apparent, it is not free in movement and is mechanically hampered. It is submitted as an example, only. You may judge of its quality and excellence.

ART

(*A theme in words of one sound, that is, each made by one thrust of the voice.*)

Art in a strict sense is skill. It is that force of the mind which leads one to do, to act or to build more than just well. And, since it is thus a part of the mind to guide, so, too, the heart and soul of a man prompt his acts in a like way. He shows art who is both fit and apt. Sage the mind, deft the hand, shrewd the tongue, sharp the eye and keen the ear, as may be the case, it may rest with one of these in lone place to show art; or, else, two, three or all five may be set in choice parts to work for fine ends. If art be mode or form or pose, it is still more than these; it is the clear and high thought to lead the world to a grand height where each view and scene call on men to seek, to strive, to climb and to rise.

First, Art is truth. It must not be less than that nor be shown with a fault or mar to cause it to be less strong in might or less rich in deed. If one can sing, or paint, or play, or write and thus bring to the crowd that which is fair, sweet and fine in aim, then such an one does hold in him and gives to the world true Art. Right and wrong should not mix in it. If fact miss its true points or be set in vain sway or pomp's sham, none the less must the truth be sought and seen that Art may rise to its full height and sphere. It would be a source of shame, if Art were false to the soul which gives it birth and life. Truth is its goal.

Then, next to skill, Art must be rare. It is not trite. It does not move by hard and fast rule. The place, time and mode well and far known to all are not in its claim for play of thought, grace and charm. Not found with ease, nor caught by swift steps, it is not for a quick grasp by one and all at the same time. It is hard to get, to know and to learn, and then by hard work and close thought day by day. The plebs live by law and serve that law just to live. To them skill is but a use of the hands, eyes and brain in the same way on each day and the next one to come. Once done, the first

act is all bound up in the next act and naught that is new comes from it. Its sole knack and skill are found in use. There is no flight of view, no charm of reach and no breadth of grace. Dull and dead each one of them moves his sure round each drear day, as he grinds in sweat and toil. No dreams are his. Born of clay and true to the fact, Art has no part in his life. He eats, he lives and he dies. That one who would gain skill must rise in soul above the dross of his birth, and look far off to the skies for loft of view and aim.

Then, too, taste and style go hand in hand with sense to give Art its true place. The first is the zest of its life. The whet acts as a spur to win the crown. If the use be that of a drone or an ape, it is clear that it is not a gift, nor a prize to be sought. To think, to feel and to live in Art call for wide range of the soul, thought and a far look out on the world and life. The heart, the blood, the nerves and the brawn of man seek a chance to give light and life. This is taste. The next, or style, is found in form, sound, brush, speech or act, the means to be used to give its thought or plea to the world. It dwells in vain and in each phase is false, and yet more, if its grace does not please, or if its plea be not heard. The sense out of which it gives its thought and that to which it bears the same thought must meet. The two join as one. This taste, this style and this sense are the Fine Arts.

Yet, there is one more class of which to treat. This is the Free Arts, which lead to each branch taught in a school course. Those just now set in place and these which are of both craft and trade as well, give a vast field. They are all old in point of time though they seem to be in new dress in late years. There is in them a wide range of thought, mode and skill. Here, too, is more than the dull grind of each day's toil. In these to be Art skill must show a high grade of work. To the Fine Arts they are like as mind to hand. Less of taste, less of style and less of sense, still the mind plays a large part in their use, and by the mark of skill shown thus Art claims them.

The theme is the base of all Art. Its scope must be high, wide and clear. It is the aim of art to please, to lift up, that is, to blend

all its parts, its acts, in a smooth whole so bound one by one, that the marks and lines of the bonds are lost in the rare class and fine charm of the grand thought set for the view. Hence, one must look to the earth, its life, and to the wide world for its forms and aids. Each thing, phase or view is the work of a Great Cause, as Man is the highest type of all. This source and the acts of men are the themes to claim the skill of art in song, in verse, in craft, in speech and in book.

Let us note a few types. The tool work of the man at the bench or the hum of the lathe are marks of his zeal, his growth and at the last his skill. The conch shell on the sand of the shore of the sea tell in its soft roar the rhythm and sound of the waves. A song bird on swift wing or by the sweet note in its throat gives forth its joy to bless the world. The cool stream, with the grass and moss on its banks, in the sheen of the moon or the gleam of the sun, trills a voice of glee and sings its course through the hills and fields. The rock falls from cleft and crag or with snow and ice is held in place to show the might of the hand which rules its leap from peak, its fall or its last low rest in the vale. A babe in its white crib, in sound sleep with its chub of a hand on the white pane is the germ of love, hope and life for all.

Seek from these or their like the theme to move the soul, the eye, the hand, and art will turn to skill.

Man gives self, his soul, to the world. His brain, his brawn and his nerves form the base of his acts. The skill with which he works and the sum of his acts but speak for him. Apt is he, great as well, whose Art fills the world with good things, song, joy, smiles, to the end that all near and far to his reach may be made free and glad. True art can have no aim less than this and no skill can be shown if this does not mark the height of art. As Love and Truth rule the world, so Art in its skill sets forth the lives and acts of men.

In the deep blue vault of the sky
I seek to find my art, and why?
The pure white fleece of soft drift clouds
Lifts far more than the dark of shrouds.

The soul I give to the harsh gaze
Of men who seek the skill I raise
Is set forth, clear, like the grand view
Of stars, which shine out in the blue.

ORRA EUGENE MONNETTE.

1438 words,
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March 15, 1918.

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